DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 216 091 UD 022 280

AUTHOR Scott, Elois Skeen; Damico, Sandra Bowman
TITLE Predictors of Interracial Contact for High School and University Students.
PUB DATE Mar 82
NOTE 15p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New York, NY, March, 1982).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Students; Correlation; *Extracurricular Activities; Higher Education; High Schools; *High School Students; *Interpersonal Relationship; Predictor Variables; Racial Attitudes; *Racial Integration; *Racial Relations; Whites

ABSTRACT

A study among white college undergraduates investigated the kinds of activities that promote interracial contact, and the extent to which interracial contact in high school determines interracial contact in college. Results indicated that school sponsored activities both in high school and at the university level encourage contact between students of different races. Additionally, those students who participated in one type of activity in which there was frequent contact were also likely to participate in several other types of activities that promoted frequent contact. Students who experienced frequent contact with other races in high school tended to have a high degree of interracial contact in college as well. It was concluded that the extracurricular programs of schools provide important opportunities for interaction among students of different races. It was recommended that schools exploit the potentials of extracurricular activities for improving attitudes and behaviors among students in regard to racial relations. (Author/MJL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED216091

PREDICTORS OF INTERRACIAL CONTACT FOR HIGH SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Elois Skeen Scott
Sandra Bowman Damico
University of Florida

Recognizing that limited interracial contact can lead to stereotyping and increased levels of interracial hostility, a growing number of researchers have been studying ways in which contact between students of different races can result in positive attitudes. The results of these efforts indicate that positive intergroup contact can be fostered within the school environment, but that it does not just happen; that is, a school must plan the educational program with this as one of its goals. The most consistent research finding from these various studies is that interracial attitudes and behaviors are most likely to occur when students must participate in cooperative activities with those of other races (Slavin and Madden, 1979). Additionally, friendly interracial contact is most likely to occur when both groups anticipate that the other group is also likely to be friendly (Patchen, et. al., 1974). As a result, we have begun to understand the various ways in which K-12 school environments can be structured in order to provide opportunities in which positive cross-race contact can occur. There remains, however, many unanswered

UD 022 280

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Sandra B. Damico

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

questions about the nature of interracial contact and its impact on the future behavior of individuals. This paper addresses some of them.

The major question which this paper addresses is, "Does interracial contact in high school predict interracial contact in college?" Two additional questions concern the activities or areas in which high school students experience frequent cross-race contact and the areas in which students attending a predominantly white university experience frequent contact.

Method

A questionnaire designed to measure the type of high school contact, the type of university contact, identification of those who encouraged contact, certain demographic variables related to class size, and number of blacks in the program was administered to a large class of undergraduate university students. The contact questions were developed to identify four conditions which Allport identifies as necessary for positive cross-race contact: equal status, authority sanctioned, interdependent, and cooperative.

The population included 282 students (267 whites and 15 blacks). Blacks were excluded from the analysis for several reasons, the principal reason being that there were too few to generalize.

Analysis

A canonical correlation was performed on the high school contact variables and the college contact variables. This procedure was used because (1) it uses as input two sets of

variables, and (2) it accounts for the maximum relationship between two sets of variables. Our research question was primarily aimed at looking at the relationship between high school contact and university contact.

Additional correlations within high school and within college were performed.

Results

Five canonical variates were found to be significant (see Table 1). In the first canonical variate, it is interesting to note that the two highest loading high school variables (*Go to Religious Services* and *Have Them Visit in Your Home*) are negatively related to participation in college athletic activities and positively related to interpersonal activities (*Go to Religious Services* and *Have Them Visit in Your Home*) at the college level. In the second variate, informal activities in high school were in the same direction (negative) at the college level, while the structured activity (school publications) was positively related in high school and college. In the remaining three variates, similar relationships were found. Activities which require personal interaction tend to be positively related to each other and negatively related to structured activities, which may allow, but not necessarily require, interaction. It is clear, however, that high school contact does predict university contact, and that there are two major relationships. First, authority-sanctioned activities (such as *Go to Religious Services* and *Have Them Visit in Your Home*) are related to each other and cooperative

activities (such as *Participate on Athletic Teams*) are related to each other.

Correlations of those students who reported frequent contact were performed in order to determine in which areas contact occurred most frequently. The within high school correlations (see Table 2) indicated that students who reported having had frequent cross-race contact in one area also were likely to report that they had high contact in other areas as well. The correlations indicate that there were three clusters of activities which promote high contact in high school:

1. Students who had high contact at informal parties and dinners were also likely to have had frequent contact extend to talking to other-race students about personal and confidential matters, visiting in their homes, and having them visit in their homes.
2. Students whose high contact was through participation on a school publication also were likely to have had high contact in student government.
3. Those whose frequent contact situations were participation in other school teams, clubs, or activities also indicated that they attended athletic events with students of other races.

Patterns of contact also emerged among students who reported having high cross-race contact while at the university (see Table 3). The following clusters emerged for these

students:

1. Students who indicated that they frequently went to informal parties and dinners with members of other races also reported that they (a) attended athletic events with them, (b) talked to them about personal and confidential matters, (c) visited in their homes, (d) had them visit in their homes, and (e) participated with them in school related clubs, teams, or other activities.
2. Students who have frequent cross-race contact through participation in religious services are also likely to have high contact in musical activities such as band or choral groups.
3. Those who have high contact through participation on athletic teams also attend athletic events with other-race students and participate with them in other school teams, clubs, or activities.
4. Those who have frequent contact through participation in a musical group also have high contact through religious services, work on a school publication, and are involved in student government.

In sum, then, school-sponsored activities both in high school and at the university level promote cross-race contact. Additionally, those students who participate in one type of activity in which there is frequent contact are also likely to participate in several other types of activities which also promote frequent contact. That there are different clusters

of activities in which this contact occurs, indicates that different types of students with different interests are able to find areas in which they can participate and which also promote high interracial contact.

Discussion

Because we found a significant relationship to exist between having cross-race contact in high school and having cross-race contact in college, we interpret our findings to mean that the extracurricular programs of schools provide important opportunities for students to experience cross-race contact. While in both high school and at the university level a group of students reported that they had frequent contact of the personal, informal type, the majority reported that their contact was through participation in school-sponsored activities. These findings are consistent with the results of Cooke who adds another dimension to contact--the opportunity to get to know someone or the acquaintance potential is required for positive cross-race contact.

Based on these data, we would encourage schools to give more attention to the potential within existing programs for facilitating positive intergroup relationships. The basic criteria for positive intergroup contact postulated by Allport (1954) include equal status, cooperation, and the support of those in authority positions. (Participation on an athletic team, by the very nature of the activity, encourages these behaviors. However, most students in high school and college do not have the abilities necessary to plan on a school team.)

Instead, they participate in a wide variety of other school-sponsored activities such as musical groups, student government, and various types of clubs. It is obvious that some students report frequent contact with other-race students through these activities; what is not apparent, however, is the quality of this contact. The potential for school-sponsored activities to foster positive group contact is extremely high. However, mere participation in these activities does not guarantee that all students are afforded equal status nor that they are required by the situation to learn to work cooperatively with those different from themselves. In this same vein, it is somewhat discouraging to note that students did not indicate that teachers, club sponsors, or any other adult encouraged cross-race interaction.

Based on these data, we would make several recommendations to schools:

(a) Since school-sponsored extracurricular activities are the most frequent areas in which cross-race contact is experienced in high school, the potential for improving interracial attitudes and behaviors should be capitalized upon. The most obvious way in which this could be accomplished would be to avoid use of restrictive criteria for participation such as gradepoint average.

(b) Sponsors of school related activities should be sensitive to the opportunities available for equal status and cooperative contact and encourage these types of interactions. While the extracurricular

programs of schools provide the environment within which positive interracial attitudes may develop, they will probably need the endorsement and encouragement of the group sponsor.

(c) Avoid school policies which may result in a racial division of the school's extracurricular program (Collins, 1978). There are numerous instances where one racial group in a high school would take over an activity such as student government while another controlled the chorus.

(d) Efforts should be made to attract wider participation in school extracurricular activities. Those students who do participate report frequent cross-race contact, but many students never take advantage of these activities. In addition to providing an opportunity for positive interracial contact, the activity program also "...increases student attachment to the school, reduces student alienation, provides alternative channels for students to develop self-esteem..." (Crain, 1981, p. 121).

Table 1

CANONICAL CORRELATIONS FOR HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE INTERRACIAL CONTACT

Categories: HIGH SCHOOL	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5
Go to Informal Parties	-.3924306	-.5065042	0.4758077	0.6265879	-.3767232
Attend Athletic Events	-.3755867	-.0895110	0.3569165	0.1258043	0.3163314
Go to Religious Services	0.5818568	-.2556775	0.3492721	-.0270602	0.5504840
Discuss Personal Matters	0.0389055	-.5687555	-.8196186	-.0810231	-.2307041
Visit in Their Homes	-.4469704	0.4159476	-.4757631	0.1993942	0.4084097
Have Them Visit in Your Home	0.7243766	-.0752744	0.1717458	-.0114973	0.1856015
Participate on an Athletic Team	-.3627132	-.1291212	-.1392134	-.5272339	0.1107260
Participate in a Musical Group	0.1628512	0.1416787	0.0741909	0.1975934	-.4294553
Participate in School Publications	-.0669641	0.5181011	0.0819960	0.1244510	0.3447850
Participate in Student Government	-.0122991	0.2478776	-.3331323	0.4546137	-.2087043
Participate in Other School Activity	-.0861093	0.2135049	0.0989910	-.2994366	0.3275488

Categories: COLLEGE	W1	W2	W3	W4	W5
Go to Informal Parties	-0.078663	-0.334508	0.394103	0.625597	-0.711954
Attend Athletic Events	-0.478948	-0.064556	0.173976	0.213723	0.493312
Go to Religious Services	0.649296	-0.242200	0.267563	-0.138770	0.491960
Discuss Personal Matters	-0.259032	-0.337894	-1.182383	0.060212	-0.026602
Visit in Their Homes	-0.164035	0.975301	-0.073627	0.649417	-0.135794
Have Them Visit in Your Home	0.494873	-0.988855	0.246587	-0.407400	0.346104
Participate on an Athletic Team	-0.503027	-0.070536	-0.015922	-0.602539	0.234889
Participate in a Musical Group	0.093151	-0.210597	-0.165087	-0.048061	-0.476569
Participate in School Publications	0.332277	0.651923	-0.168992	-0.120390	0.532094
Participate in Student Government	0.198846	0.313414	0.160736	0.506402	-0.132002
Participate in Other School Activity	-0.198222	-0.004785	0.099243	-0.030255	0.247532
Canonical Correlation	0.5409	0.4857	0.4715	0.3992	0.3960
Canonical R-Squared	0.2925	0.2359	0.2223	0.1594	0.1568
F Statistic	2.8445	2.5502	2.3110	1.9490	1.6828
Probability>F	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001	0.0026

Table 2
CORRELATION OF INTERRACIAL CONTACT FOR HIGH SCHOOL*

	Go to Informal Parties	Attend Athletic Events	Go to Religious Services	Discuss Personal Matters	Visit in Their Home	Visit in Your Home	Participate Athletic Team	Participate Musical Group	Participate School Publication	Participate Student Government	Participate Other Sch. Activity
Go to Informal Parties				.43515	.53228	.48421					
Attend Athletic Events											.45298
Go to Religious Services											
Discuss Personal Matters	.43515				.66872	.61357					
Visit in Their Home	.53228			.66872		.75058					
Visit in Your Home	.48421			.61357	.75058						
Participate on Athletic Team											
Participate in Musical Group											
Participate in School Publication										.42435	
Participate in Student Government									.42455		.52424
Participate in Other School Activity		.45298									

*The entire correlation matrix has not been provided for this paper presentation. Only the highest correlations have been included. The entire matrix may be obtained upon request.

Table 3
CORRELATION OF INTERRACIAL CONTACT FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS*

	Go to Informal Parties	Attend Athletic Events	Go to Religious Services	Discuss Personal Matters	Visit in Their Home	Visit in Your Home	Participate Athletic Team	Participate Musical Group	Participate School Publication	Participate Student Government	Participate Other Sch. Activity
Go to Informal Parties		.59434		.51976	.57214	.56393					.48816
Attend Athletic Events	.59434										
Go to Religious Services								.40334			
Discuss Personal Matters	.51976				.65611	.67523			.44081		.42686
Visit in Their Home	.57214			.65611		.84308					.46422
Visit in Your Home	.56393			.67523	.84308						.46588
Participate on Athletic Team		.44811									.50740
Participate in Musical Group			.40334						.51197	.43544	
Participate in School Publication				.44081				.51197		.67496	.48669
Participate in Student Government									.43541	.67496	.55355
Participate in Other School Activity	.48816	.45490		.42686	.46422	.46588	.50746		.48669	.55355	

*The entire correlation matrix has not been provided for this paper presentation. Only the highest correlations have been included. The entire matrix may be obtained upon request.